

SONY ESPN
Serie A
Roma v Fiorentina
Live from 2:00am (Wednesday)
TEN 1HD
South Africa v Sri Lanka
4th ODI
Live from 5:30pm

PEREZ PREFERS ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez has admitted that a club famed for cherry-picking the best talent in world football identify transfer targets based on sporting and economic criteria. The Liga heavyweights have always boasted some of the finest talent, but the pursuit of the very best has been stepped up under Perez's regime. Real have made a habit of acquiring at least one marquee signing every summer, while some seasons have seen several high-profile figures added to the squad. And now Perez has admitted that much thought is given to merchandise opportunities as the ability each addition brings to the fold. In an interview with BBC World Service, Perez said: "People understand the obvious – that we sign big players like Ronaldo, Zidane and Figo. But after the players there is the economic sports equation. "In our model it is fundamental to understand that in the signing of every player, we have to have in our heads: what's the income generated?"



—AGENCIES



Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) players celebrate after their win over Dhaka Education Board (DEB) in the National Youth Hockey Championship final at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan seek unity

SPORTS REPORTER



With their image tarnished and performance in the field reaching its nadir, the once revered Mohammedan Sporting Club officials finally realised that it was about time to work together to revive the club's image. The first sign of that serious effort was on display at the club's Motijheel tent yesterday when former Mohammedan president Monirul Haque Chowdhury initiated a fruitful dialogue with the sitting board of directors of the club.

"We all are responsible for this poor state of Mohammedan. But the bad times have allowed us to be united again. Mohammedan faced such a bad patch in 1977 but it bounced back in the next year and became unbeaten champion in football. It is time to be united in a bid to restore the pride of Mohammedan," said Chowdhury after his meeting with the club's director-in-charge Lokman Hossain Bhuyian.

"I was waiting for this day. We have discussed how we will be united and how we will work together. We want to form champion squads in both football and cricket in upcoming season. Our target is to produce good results in all the sports events we will be participating in," Lokman responded.

But Lokman, the man responsible for leading the club for the last six years, has miserably failed to uphold the image of the century-old club since it

turned into a limited company in 2011.

Among the three major sports – football, cricket and hockey, – the once-popular club has managed just one trophy in hockey in the last six years. To add to the misery of its thousands of followers the Black and Whites hit the lowest ebb in their football history, finishing 10th among the 12 teams in the Bangladesh Premier League. They also finished fourth and fifth in Premier Hockey League and Premier Division Cricket League respectively.

Lokman was responsible for a clear division among current and former club officials, players and supporters. It has also been alleged that the board of directors led by Lokman has been dithering to hold elections for different reasons.

And yesterday's meeting was the first attempt to pave the way for a resolution of many pending issues that have been crippling the club for the last six years.

However, rather than holding the existing board of directors accountable for the poor state of Mohammedan SC, unity among former and present club officials, former players and the supporters have been sought to pull the club out of the mire. Abdus Salam Murshedy, Badal Roy, Mozammel Haque Babu, FR Babul, Imtiaz Sultan Jony, Rummon Bin Wali Sabbir, Ilias Hossain, Jakaria Pintu, Protap Sangkar Hazra and Qumrun Nahar Dana are the few significant names who attended the meeting.

HOCKEY WORLD LEAGUE Malaysia in for Canada

SPORTS REPORTER

Malaysia have been drafted alongside hosts Bangladesh in Pool A of the Hockey World League Round-2 which is scheduled to get underway from March 4 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

Malaysia, who are 13th in world rankings and third in Asia, came as the replacement for Canada who have recently pulled out of the competition citing security concerns.

"Today we have got the revised schedule for the Hockey World League Round-2 from FIH (International Hockey Federation) and saw the name of Malaysia in place of Canada," said Bangladesh Hockey Federation general secretary Abdus Sadeque yesterday.

Dhaka phase will have its curtain lifted through a fixture between China and Ghana while Bangladesh are set to play the fourth and final match of the opening day against Malaysia.

Meanwhile, German coach Oliver Kurtz left for Sri Lanka on Sunday night for the players' visas to tour South Africa.

NATIONAL YOUTH HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP BKSP end DEB dream

SPORTS REPORTER



Dhaka Education Board (DEB) had their dream of regaining the National Youth Hockey Championship title after 34 years shattered yesterday at the hands of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan as the country's lone sports education institute were crowned champions of the 26th edition.

BKSP made light work of DEB, who mostly consists of players from BKSP, handing their opponents a 5-0 defeat in the final at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium to secure their 13th trophy and second in a row.

Returning after a 10-year hiatus, DEB did well to hold off their superior counterparts – comprised of experienced players from Premier League champions Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club, third place finishers Abahani and Dhaka Wanderers Club – till the 20th minute after which their resistance seemingly collapsed for the rest of the duration, forcing DEB to content themselves with a second place finish.

The tournament's top-scorer Sohanur Rahman put BKSP's noses in front by converting a penalty during the 20th minute before Debashish Kumar doubled the margin by availing a fierce angular hit from Mohammad Mohsin. Mohsin then went on to score twice during the 29th and 37th minutes respectively while Sohanur

put the game to bed in the 58th minute. "Yes, it was an uneven battle between the two sides because all the players know each other. Generally we would like to form the squad with our best players and then allow others to play in other teams," said BKSP manager Kawsar Ali after the match.

However, Kawsar also believes he saw a few other good teams amongst the 35 in participation with Dhaka District, Dhaka Board and Dinajpur having the ability to reach the final.

Man-of-the-tournament Shafiqul Alam Shishir of BKSP, who played for Mariner Youngs Club last season, said that there were some quality players in the Championship but regular practices and the experience of playing in the the Premier League kept BKSP ahead of their competition.

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation has arranged the youth championship for the last three years successively but the knockout format of the tournament raised questions about the game's governing body's sincerity to develop the sport from its roots.

"Sure, we also felt that the teams should be given more room to play more matches but we could not do it due to the financial constraints though we initially planned to hold the championship on league basis," said BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque adding that they will try to hold the youth championship on a league basis in the future.

Mourinho taunts Chelsea

AFP, Leicester



United boss accused the Premier League leaders of lacking style.

Mourinho's side cruised to a 3-0 victory at Leicester on Sunday and he was quick to highlight the difference between the dominant United display and what he perceives as the more prosaic efforts of Antonio Conte's men.

Frustrated by criticism of the cautious nature of his teams when he was in charge at Chelsea, Mourinho made it clear that he is unimpressed the way the Blues, currently nine points clear at the top, and also Tottenham and Liverpool, have been praised despite employing safety-first philosophies.

"My team is playing very well but for many years in my career, especially in this country, when my teams were ruthless and phenomenal defensively I listened week after week to people saying that was not enough, despite winning the title three times," Mourinho said.

"This season it looks that being strong defensively and good on the counter attack is art. That is a big change in England.

"We are Manchester United, we want to play attacking football. This is the way the fans want us to play.

"But I don't want to be a manager of a team that doesn't win matches. We

Jose Mourinho took a swipe at his old club Chelsea as the Manchester



Manchester United midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan (L) celebrates his opening goal with teammate Juan Mata during their Premier League encounter against Leicester City at the King Power Stadium on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

have to score goals. Today we did and that made the difference. Today was very important."

Mourinho's claims seemed a little harsh, but he was in typically mischievous mood and even referenced his demise as Chelsea boss last season, which came following a defeat at Leicester.

"The last time I was in this chair I was sacked a day later," he said with a smirk before bringing an end to his post-match press conference at the King Power Stadium.

Mourinho's buoyant outlook was a contrast to his sulky demeanour follow-

ing last week's draw against Hull and the key to his mood swing was Henrikh Mkhitaryan, the United midfielder who tormented Leicester with his subtle passing and clever movement.

Mkhitaryan scored United's opener and set up the third for Juan Mata after Zlatan Ibrahimovic had doubled the visitors' lead.

Mourinho acknowledged the first goal had been crucial as it boosted his team's belief and shattered Leicester's already fragile morale.

"We missed the first big chance but scored the next one. That is the story of the game," he said.

Cameroon stun Egypt to win Nations Cup

REUTERS, Libreville



The African Nations Cup in Gabon will be remembered for delivering an inspiring success story culminating with Cameroon's brilliant come-from-behind victory over Egypt to claim a fifth title in Libreville.

The dramatic return of the Indomitable Lions to the summit of the African game came against expectation, achieved with a squad of little experience after several key players put club above country in the preceding months.

Overcoming difficult odds to come through a taxing tournament – played in stifling humidity, on poor pitches and with complex travel arrangements – and claim the trophy gave the tournament a much-needed lease of new life.

Too many previous tournament have suffered from the burden of poor football, disappointing crowds and a distinct lack of on-field drama. Usually it is controversy that marks the event.

Cameroon's exploits, however, ensured the 2017 edition concluded as one of the better recent Nations Cup.

Cameroon, last champions 15 years ago, were given little chance at the start, a side in transition after coach Hugo Broos made a comprehensive, almost cavalier, overhaul of the side in the preceding months.

Just a month before kick off, his plans looked in tatters as eight players declared their unavailability, rejecting call-ups to stay with their clubs.

It was the first significant show of dissent from African footballers, who are placed in an awkward position every two years by the tug of loyalty between club and country that the timing Nations Cup, in the middle of the European club season, forces on them.

It was an issue quickly forgotten as the tournament kicked off with some favourites quickly falling by the wayside.

Algeria were in trouble from their first game, hosts Gabon and holders Ivory Coast went out in the first round and Cameroon's post-match penalty shootout win over impressive Senegal in the last eight proved the biggest upset.

"Our ambition was to finish in the top two in our group, get to the knockout round and see what happened from there. Over the weeks we went from being a squad to becoming a family," said winning coach Hugo Broos after Sunday's 2-1 victory.

The progress to the semi-final of Burkina Faso, also little regarded at the start, added another exciting element in the same way the progress of unheralded nations spiced up the European Championship last year.

Refereeing showed a dramatic improvement in another boost for the African Football.

Leaked emails taint Beckham

AFP, London

David Beckham's squeaky-clean image as a British cultural icon has taken a battering following the leaking of expletive-strewn emails in which he apparently raged about not receiving a knighthood.

The former England football captain is said to have sworn in emails to his PR team after being told he would not be made "Sir David" by Queen Elizabeth II because of concerns about his tax affairs.

A spokesman for the 41-year-old said the emails, released by the Football Leaks website, were "hacked and doctored" to give a "deliberately inaccurate picture".

Monday's Daily Mail spoke of the "Shame of Saint Becks", with a columnist pronouncing him "a foul-mouthed, determined egotist" who had used charity work as part of an "increasingly desperate" bid for a knighthood.

Reports on Friday said Beckham refused to put his own money into his humanitarian 7 Fund and tried to obtain reimbursement from the UN children's agency UNICEF for expenses met by his sponsors.

Cook quits as Test captain

England's most capped captain to stay on as player

AFP, London



Alastair Cook resigned as England Test captain on Monday after a record 59 matches in the role, saying it was "a sad day" but the right decision for the team.

Yorkshire batsman Joe Root is the strong favourite to take over with an announcement expected in the next fortnight, as England build towards the Ashes in Australia at the end of the year.

Cook, England's leading scorer in Tests with 11,057 runs, became captain in August 2012 and led his country to Ashes glory on home soil in 2013 and 2015 as well as series wins in India and South Africa.

"It's been a huge honour to be England captain and to lead the Test team over the past five years," Cook, 32, who intends to carry on playing Test cricket, said in a statement.

"Stepping down has been an incredibly hard decision, but I know this is the correct decision for me and at the right time for the team."

Cook's decision to stand down follows England's 4-0 series defeat in India at the end of last year, which put pressure on him to quit.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said a "proper process" had started to appoint a successor, with the team not in Test action again until July.

Cook, who also led England in a record 69 one-day internationals between 2010 and 2014, is the country's most capped Test skipper and has scored more Test centuries than any previous captain.

He was named Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 2012 and ICC (International Cricket Council) World Test Captain in 2013.

He tendered his resignation to England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chairman Colin Graves on Sunday.



"It's a sad day personally in many ways, but I want to thank everyone I've captained, all the coaches and support staff and, of course, the England supporters and the Barmy Army who follow us home and away and have given us unwavering support," Cook added.

"Playing for England really is a privilege and I hope to carry on as a Test player, making a full contribution and helping the next England captain and the team however I can."

England's director of cricket Andrew Strauss said Cook had made a "fantastic contribution" and "deserves to be seen as one of our country's great captains".

A classically elegant left-handed opening batsman, the square-jawed Cook took charge of the England Test team following Strauss's retirement from the game in August 2012.

In his first tour as captain he led England to a first series win in India in 28 years, hitting centuries in the first three Tests.

His first Ashes series in 2013 ended in triumph and after a harrowing 5-0 whitewash in Australia in 2013-14, England regained the urn in 2015.

CAPTAIN COOK

Mat	Won	Lost	Draw	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50
59	24	22	13	4844	263	46.57	12	24

MOST-CAPPED ENGLAND TEST CAPTAINS

Player	Matches	Span	Win%
Alastair Cook	59	2010-2016	40.67
Michael Atherton	54	1993-2001	24.07
Michael Vaughan	51	2003-2008	50.98
Andrew Strauss	50	2006-2012	48
Nasser Hussain	45	1999-2003	37.77